

**National Marine Sanctuary Program  
Advisory Council Information Bulletin  
March 2004**

**Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary**

The NOAA *R/V Shearwater* was on display and open for dockside tours on Saturday, January 31, 2004 for the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum's (SBMM) Community Day Event. Over 400 people participated in SBMM Community Day at the Santa Barbara Waterfront. Hands-on stations included a critter touch tank hosted by University of California Santa Barbara's Marine Science Institute, a ROV demonstration hosted by Santa Barbara City College's Marine Technology students, kelp beds, basket weaving, dockside tours of the *R/V Shearwater* and the US Coast Guard cutter *Blackfin*. The Channel Islands Argonauts were also invited to present their poster projects to the community, which compared and contrasted the isthmus of Panama to the Channel Islands, or the tropical rainforests to the kelp forests, or the native Panamanian people to the Chumash Indians.

The class of 2004 Channel Islands Naturalist Corps volunteers graduated from the Naturalist Corps training program on Saturday, January 31. The 110 Channel Islands Naturalist Corps volunteers are cross-trained by both the sanctuary and Channel Islands National Park. They provide naturalist and outreach services aboard whalewatching trips, community festivals and events, in area schools, and on nature hikes in the Channel Islands.

On February 5th, the California Fish and Game voted to list the Xantu's murrelet as threatened under the California Endangered Species Act. The Xantu's murrelet key habitat is the Channel Islands, with the largest nesting population on Santa Barbara Island. Key threats to this small seabird include habitat loss, excessive nest predation by invasive and native species (rats, deer mice), low nesting rates, and disturbance. The superintendent of Channel Islands National Park and the manager of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary both pledged to continue monitoring, conduct research and to support ongoing recovery efforts. The sanctuary's *R/V Shearwater* will support this season's almost weekly nesting surveys, beginning on March 22nd.

On February 10th, the sanctuary hosted a Marine Wildlife Viewing Workshop as a part of a series of workshops hosted by California sanctuaries, NOAA Fisheries, and the NMFS Office of Protected Resources. The workshop brought over 50 community user groups together to discuss issues pertaining to responsibly viewing California marine life and to receive input on the draft publication "Responsibly Watching California's Marine Wildlife: A Handbook for Ocean Users" (at <http://www.sanctuaries.nos.noaa.gov/library/national/wwhandbook.pdf>).

**Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary**

Court TV's program "Extreme Evidence" featured several shipwrecks in the Gulf of the Farallones as suspect sources of many oil spill and tarball incidents, which over the years have oiled and killed seabirds and other marine wildlife. The story explored a number of possible sources of the oil, including the sunken tanker *Puerto Rican*. However, through high-tech molecular "fingerprinting," scientists matched the "mystery spill" oil with that remaining in the shipwreck *Jacob Luckenbach*, a freighter headed for Korea that sank in 1953. In 2002, the

Farallones sanctuary took part in the lightering operation, which removed 100,000 gallons of oil from the wreck.

At the Gulf of the Farallones' Crissy Field/Presidio Visitor Center, 2004 got off to an impressive start. A total of 2,909 visitors came through the center, the highest January attendance since the center opened in 1998. Formal education programs for seventy-one students from four schools, including touch-tank, building dioramas of sanctuary wildlife and habitats, and outdoor activities at Crissy Field Beach. Ages ranged from three to sixteen years.

On February 11th, the sanctuary convened its 7th Biennial Research Workshop in San Francisco's Presidio to focus on scientific investigations, education and current and emerging issues relating to the marine environment. This multi-disciplinary symposium included whale biologists, seabird specialists, oceanographers, geographers, marine botanists, ecologists, resource managers and educators from academia, local/state/federal agencies and non-governmental organizations. The forum represented an opportunity for the scientific community to learn about the latest in research technology and scientific investigations. The symposium encouraged development of new partnerships and strengthening established ones with governmental and non-governmental institutions, to facilitate collaborations and pooling of resources such as field equipment, ship time and other logistical needs. The sanctuary used this as an opportunity to update researchers on the progress of their Joint Management Plan Review. The sanctuary will also use the results from this meeting to meet potential partners and discuss additional review and contribution to our draft Management Plan. Abstract requests were sent to over 600 researchers and marine educators, private organizations, schools and public agencies known to be investigating or educating the public about the ecosystem within the region. This year over 70 abstracts were submitted. Workshop Proceedings will be posted on line at

<http://farallones.noaa.gov/workshops/2004feb11/pdfs/workshopproceedings2004.pdf>

The sanctuary continues to work with the Office of California Office of Spill Prevention and Response on revising the San Francisco Bay Area Contingency Plan, which is the regional plan for wildlife response efforts in the event of an oil spill. The plan covers the outer coast from southern San Mateo County through northern Sonoma County and all San Francisco Bay area counties. Continued close coordination with state officials is expected. The final plan is due this summer.

#### **Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary**

The Mel Fisher Maritime Museum celebrates their new accreditation from the American Association of Museums. Less than 80% of the nation's museums are accredited. The Mel Fisher Maritime Museum is the first museum in Monroe County to be accredited. The museum's exhibitions attract almost 200,000 patrons annually, making it the most visited history museum in the Southeast. The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary maintains a good relationship with the Museum, which also displays NOAA artifacts in a collection from a 1733 Galleon wrecked at Coffins Patch. The renewal of the Curatorial Services Agreement between the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society that provides for professional care and management, repository facility, insurance and proper display or storage of the NOAA artifacts is pending.

#### **Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary**

The sanctuary gave a one-hour presentation to 55 Naturalists of the Galveston Bay Area chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program as part of their continuing education program. Sponsored state-wide by the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and the Texas Cooperative Extension Service (including Sea Grant), the "Texas Master Naturalist" program develops a local corps of volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities. Participants volunteer for activities and events such as restoration projects, classroom presentations & field trips, beach clean-ups, etc. As a result of the presentation, some of the naturalists are interested in proposing that SCUBA certification and/or participation in Flower Garden Banks workshops and "Naturalist on Board" trainings be approved by their administration for advanced training credit.

#### **Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary**

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation and Hawaii's world-renowned hotel chain Outrigger Hotels & Resorts announced a one-of-a-kind public-private agreement this week that allows the hotel chain to offer unique educational opportunities about the sanctuary to its guests. The Foundation will coordinate a series of permanent educational exhibits, expert lectures, ocean activities and community service projects at Outrigger's various properties. By far the most novel component is the Marine Life Kiosk, a prototype that took more than two years to complete. The event marking the signing of the agreement was a tremendous success. All four Hawaii TV stations covered the announcement as well as print media. The sanctuary's manager represented NOAA. Representing the foundation was board member Jean-Michel Cousteau. The Outrigger chain's general manager and the CEO were present to make the announcement. Numerous pre-schoolers wearing whale hats that they made during the educational program were surrounding the podium.

#### **Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary**

On February 7, 2004 the annual Otter Bowl competition was held at Monterey Peninsula College in Monterey, co-hosted by the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and the MATE Center. Over 90 high school students and teachers participated in the annual marine science competition, one of 24 conducted nationally and coordinated by CORE - Consortium for Oceanographic Research and Education. Over 50 volunteers support the event, and many local businesses provided prizes and in-kind support. One of the new teams, Albany High School, recruited under the diversity initiative, came in second to the four-year reigning champions - Mission San José.

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary manager and select staff met with 15 representatives of NOAA Fisheries and the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC), including Don McIsaac, Executive Director of the Council. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss various intra-agency perspectives on ecosystem protection, its interface with fisheries management, and the fishery related components of the sanctuary's draft management plan. Staff gave presentations on plans addressing Special Marine Protected Areas, the Effects of Trawling on Benthic Habitats, Davidson Seamount, Fisheries Issues in Research and Education, and Krill Harvesting. Areas of potential cooperation were identified, and the sanctuary received constructive input on means to effectively pursue the strategies that were presented. Additionally, several areas for specific action were identified by way of either recommendation



or request on the part of NOAA Fisheries and PFMC staff, including presentations at upcoming PFMC meetings and development of an MOU between PFMC, NOAA Fisheries Southwest Region, and NOAA National Ocean Service, patterned after the MOU developed by Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

#### **Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve**

Mokupapapa Discovery Center for the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve in Hilo continues to have an outstanding daily visitor count. For the days of Feb 10-14, 2004, there were a total of 1,386 visitors.

#### **Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary**

Ed Bowlby, Research Coordinator, gave a presentation on sea otters, ecosystems and resource issues of Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary to the National Association of Science Writers on Feb. 11. C.J. Casson of the Seattle Aquarium was a co-presenter and he spoke on animal husbandry and overall Aquarium highlights.

#### **National Marine Sanctuary Program**

On February 26, 2004, the Program announced that it will establish a Northern Management Area (NMA) within the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. This area extends from the San Mateo/Santa Cruz line northward to the existing boundary between the Monterey Bay and Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuaries. The current legal boundaries of the two sanctuaries will not be changed. The Gulf of the Farallones sanctuary will assume full management and administrative responsibilities of the NMA in March 2004. This issue has received significant attention from the Members of Congress, area communities, local governments and the media for the last seven years. Since Monterey Bay Sanctuary's designation in 1992, the northern portion of the sanctuary has been under co-management with the Gulf of the Farallones Sanctuary. The NMSP decided to resolve the co-management issue during the Joint Management Plan Review process (JMPR), a process currently underway to revise the management plans of Monterey Bay, Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank Sanctuaries. The local communities of the NMA have for years felt geographically aligned with the Gulf of the Farallones Sanctuary. This new management structure seeks to enhance sanctuary resource management by keeping the communities closer to the managing sanctuary staff. This solution is the result of an open public process, and a rigorous data collection and analyses. The NMSP considered input from the JMPR boundary assessment team, advisory councils, general public, and local and federally elected officials. This is a long-term solution that gives one sanctuary the decision-making authority, brings both advisory councils together, and aligns the sanctuary management to encourage more community involvement. This decision was made to maximize community participation and ownership in sanctuary management.

National Marine Sanctuary Program's Cheryl Graham has been appointed to serve as member of the Board of Directors of the newly established University of North Carolina Coastal Studies Institute. The Institute was established in January 2003 to meet the marine science educational and research needs for the northeast regional of North Carolina. The Institute will focus its research efforts in four areas: 1) maritime history and nautical archaeology, 2) coastal processes, 3) estuarine ecology, and 4) tourism and coastal resources management. The

Institute will work collaboratively with the five other marine science centers: Elizabeth City State University, East Carolina University, UNC at Chapel Hill, North Carolina State University, and UNC at Wilmington. Board members are asked to serve a three-year term.

NOAA announces the commencement of the largest North Pacific humpback whale study ever undertaken. The study--Structure of Populations, Level of Abundance, and Status of Humpbacks (SPLASH)--is unprecedented in its international cooperation and geographic scope. Researchers from the U.S., Japan, Russia, Mexico, Canada, Philippines, Costa Rica, Panama, Nicaragua and Guatemala are collaborating in this effort to understand the population structure of humpback whales across the North Pacific, and to assess the status, trends and potential human impacts to this population.

Daniel J. Basta, director of the National Marine Sanctuary Program, presented a lecture on the program's USS Alligator Project to approximately 100 midshipmen and faculty at the U.S. Naval Academy on February 4. The NMSP and the Navy's Office of Naval Research initiated the Alligator Project in 2002 in an effort to shed new light on America's maritime heritage. The U.S. Naval Academy has supported this project through independent and capstone research conducted by midshipmen in the Oceanography and Ocean Engineering Departments. As the Navy's first submarine, the USS Alligator holds a special meaning to naval submariners who are anxious to help the program uncover the secrets of this remarkable vessel.

The national education coordinator for the National Marine Sanctuary Program, traveled to Panama to participate in the JASON Project's fifteenth expedition titled "Rainforests at the Crossroads." Conceived by Dr. Bob Ballard, the noted ocean explorer who discovered the wreck of the Titanic, the JASON Foundation for Education/The JASON Project is one of NOAA's most significant points of entry into America's classrooms, reaching over 1.7 million students and 34,000 teachers every year. The JASON Project is sponsored by the JASON Foundation for Education, the nation's leading provider of experienced-based science and math curriculum and professional development for grades 4-9, with financial support from NOAA.

In partnership with the Magothy River Association and the United States Naval Academy, the National Marine Sanctuary Program trained 14 Naval Academy Midshipmen in low-visibility science diving to prepare them to assist in an oyster restoration project in the Magothy River, a branch of the Chesapeake Bay near Annapolis, Maryland. This year's training, consisting of pool and classroom sessions, marks the fourth year of this unique partnership that has lead to significant oyster repopulation in the river.

National and local leaders joined Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere Tim Keeney on Feb. 19 at the groundbreaking of the Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center. President Bush's chief environmental advisor Jim Connaughton, the Chair of CEQ; Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen; ocean explorer Jean-Michel Cousteau and Key West Mayor Jimmy Weekley participated in the event. The Eco-Discovery Center will be a world-class visitor facility, part of the three-building Dr. Nancy Foster Florida Keys Environmental Complex, which is slated to open in the summer of 2005 at the Truman Annex in Key West. The center will feature 6,000 square feet of interactive, professionally developed exhibits on the Florida Keys, and focus on human interaction with the environment, the management of marine protected areas, and the maritime culture and history of the area. It will be managed by the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

The American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) will host their annual AZA Capitol Hill reception on May 11, 2004 in the Cannon House Caucus Room. AZA has chosen the theme: "Partners in Conservation" for this year's event, and has decided to showcase three of their partners: the National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP), the National Geographic Society and the Wildlife Conservation Society. Actor John Cleese has been invited to be the Master of Ceremony (to be confirmed), and Jack Hanna, internationally acclaimed wildlife conservationist, will be the keynote speaker. NMSP signed a memorandum of agreement with the AZA in fall 2003. Through this partnership, the AZA can facilitate the relationship between the NMSP and major zoos and aquaria across the country. The AZA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquaria in conservation, education, science, and recreation. The AZA has 213 member institutions. Approximately 30 are aquaria, another 20 are combined zoos and aquaria, the rest are zoos. The institutions receive 142 million visitors annually. On March 18, 2004, NMSP will host the board members of the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) for a field trip to the Channel Island National Marine Sanctuary. This trip will allow directors from major zoo and aquaria to meet NMSP managers and discuss concrete steps to implement the NMSP-AZA Memorandum of Agreement signed in November 2003.

On February 9, the *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary manager, headquarters National Marine Sanctuary staff, and representatives from Booz Allen participated in a meeting at Nauticus, the National Maritime Center in Norfolk, to discuss the establishment of a NMSP office and exhibit at Nauticus. The exhibit will focus on NMSP's Maritime Heritage Program. The meeting was attended by several Nauticus senior staff members and representatives from the NOAA's Chesapeake Bay Program, who are also establishing an office and exhibit at Nauticus. It was agreed that the next step was to develop a preliminary concept for the NMSP exhibit, similar to one already developed by NOAA's Chesapeake Bay Program with assistance from an exhibit design firm.

On February 15-20, the National Marine Sanctuary Program Education Coordinator and the National Oceanographic Data Center co-chaired a two-day special session on environmental education (Using Real-time Environmental Data for Education) at the American Society of Limnology and Oceanography and the Oceanography Society Ocean Research Conference in Hawaii. The sessions were extremely well attended with over 50 participants for each of the 22 sessions. Collaborators included the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute and Texas A&M.

On February 21-22, the National Marine Sanctuary Program's Education Team sponsored a two-day Dive into Education marine science education workshop, a professional development workshop for 85 K-12 teachers in Hawaii. Educators representing 14 different marine protected areas of the National Marine Sanctuary Program provided 36 sessions aimed at providing teachers with the knowledge and resources necessary to bring marine science into Hawaii classrooms. This Dive into Education workshop was conceived and organized by the National Marine Sanctuary Program and co-sponsored by Hawaii's Coastal Zone Management Program and America Samoa Coastal Zone Program.

The National Marine Sanctuary Program is in the process of evaluating how the program's mandate is met through partnerships with non-NOAA organizations. Each individual national marine sanctuary has completed a thorough census of all of their partnerships, as well as an internal survey to describe more in depth how partners are providing critical services to the NMSP. While the analysis of the responses is underway, a preliminary review shows that the 13



sanctuaries, the 1 coral reef ecosystem reserve, the regional offices, and headquarters have together over 424 separate partners involved in as many as 385 different partnerships. The partnering institutions represent a wide range of organizations, such as local, state and federal government agencies, U.S. Territories, Native tribes, local schools, teacher associations, major universities and their research laboratories, not-for-profit organizations, private citizens, and industry (such as oil and gas, tourism ventures, etc.). The partnerships are integrated in critical educational, scientific and sanctuary management activities.

On a fateful day in November 1898, the paddlewheel steamer Portland and its 192 passengers and crew perished in a nor'easter. For years, the location of the ship remained a mystery. In the summer of 2002, the National Marine Sanctuary Program and NURC- the University of Connecticut confirmed the location of the wreck inside NOAA's Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary. The Science Channel joined researchers on the mission to chronicle the expedition in high definition video captured from a remotely operated vehicle. The product is a 50-minute documentary with stunning images of the wreck seen for the first time, offering new insight into this maritime mystery. The exceptional documentary, "The Wreck of the Portland," credits NOAA throughout the film. It airs March 5, 2004, at 9 p.m. on The Science Channel.

The National Marine Sanctuary Program was notified that two of its film shorts in the Sanctuary Quest film series, 'Scientists at Sea' and 'Hidden Habitats' won 2003 Telly Awards. The Telly Awards are the non-broadcast film and video awards that are like the Emmy Awards for broadcast TV. The films capture sanctuary projects and are used for educational purposes at the West Coast sanctuaries.